

THE TRANSPORTATION LINK



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I have mixed feelings as I write my column for *The Transportation Link* for the last time. I have been given another opportunity to serve the small business community as the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

It seems like October 20, 1993 was just yesterday when I joined the DOT family. In the six years that I have served as Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), I have enjoyed working with our extended community of small, women-owned and disadvantaged businesses; our partners in the public and private sectors; and the DOT staff.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve President Clinton and Vice President Gore. I feel especially honored to have had the opportunity to serve under the leadership of two great Secretaries of Transportation, Secretaries Slater and Peña and Deputy Secretary Downey. Our Secretary has continually reminded us, "*That transportation is*

more than concrete, asphalt and steel...it's about people." Our mission at the OSDBU embraces that message as we do our best to serve America's small, women-owned and disadvantaged businesses. Working together in the spirit of ONE DOT we have achieved great successes, overcome many challenges



Luz Arana Hopewell
Director of the Office of Small
and Disadvantaged
Business Utilization

and served thousands of customers. I have been truly blessed to have the opportunity to meet and work with so many wonderful and dedicated small businesses and individuals throughout DOT.

I look forward to the new challenges that await me at SBA and the opportunity to continue to work in partnership with you to assure small businesses have a fair share of all U.S. Government prime and subcontract dollars. While my primary focus will be on partnering with the federal procurement community, I will also be involved in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of procurement-related training and technical assistance for women entrepreneurs.

I am leaving DOT with many fond and precious memories that I will always cherish. I wish all of you continued success in your business endeavors and may God bless each and every one of you and our great Nation.

Marketing the Department of Transportation

Marketing is the process of influencing a customer to use your goods and/or services. In this article we discuss eight tips that may be helpful as you market the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). To maximize your resources, it is important to plan how you will market your business.

1. Assess your competitive edge.

A strong marketing plan begins with an analysis of your company's strengths and weaknesses.

Do you have a unique product or service that few other companies sell? Have you been recognized for providing exceptional customer service? Do you have core knowledge from years of experience? Do you have certifications such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) 8(a) and Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), or the DOT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification?* What do you have to offer the U.S. DOT that sets you apart from your competitors?

2. Familiarize yourself with what DOT purchases and with the DOT Operating Administration that you will be marketing.

Next, examine your customers' needs and wants. What does the U.S. DOT purchase? The DOT Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) publishes a *Marketing Information Package* <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/mp/mip.html>

OSDBU

Office of Small
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wants to hear from you!! Call us toll-free at 1 800 532-1169 with questions or comments about this newsletter or our web site. The Transportation Link's content may be reprinted without permission.

that includes relevant information on OSDBU programs, points of contact, frequently asked questions and background information. Included in the *Marketing Information Package* is the *Contracting With DOT* section (located at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/mp/contract.html>) that provides specific information on each of the DOT Operating

Administrations - describing what they do and what they purchase.

Prospective contractors are encouraged to develop a general awareness of DOT's program and acquisition requirements.

DOT publishes an annual *Procurement Forecast* which announces anticipated contracting opportunities for that fiscal year (<http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/procurement/forecast.html>). Call the points of contact for those opportunities to determine whether your strengths are a good match for their needs.

Familiarize yourself with applicable laws and regulations that affect how the DOT conducts business such as the Federal Accounting Regulations (FAR) and the Transportation Acquisition Manual (TAM) (<http://www.dot.gov/ost/m60/>).

Each Operating Administration has a Small Business Specialist to work with businesses that want to learn more about contracting with that specific Operating Administration within DOT, and a Simplified Acquisition Specialist that coordinates all purchases under \$100,000 within that Operating Administration. Both of these sets of contacts are listed in the *Marketing Information Package*. These contacts can be invaluable to have in marketing your product or service.

3. Research specific opportunities. Be sure to use the Internet.

DOT advertises their planned procurements on the FedBizDev web site

in the Electronic Posting System (EPS) at (<http://www.eps.gov/>). All of the Operating Administrations announce their business opportunities directly on the Internet at this site. The system has an e-mail registration that allows vendors to register for e-mail notifications of particular types of solicitations. This allows you to target opportunities within DOT.

4. Don't forget existing customers.

Another important source of opportunities is with existing customers. If you are already working within DOT, remember that it takes much less work and money to keep a satisfied customer than it does to market, and win, a new customer. Know your existing customers well enough to recommend new ways that you can help them.

5. Focus on opportunities in your niche and prioritize.

Research all of these potential opportunities to determine which best match your company's strengths. Prioritize the opportunities that are within your niche and decide which opportunities you will further pursue, dependent on your corporate resources. Be sure you don't spread yourself too thin.

6. Prepare and submit your quotation and ensure you are responding to the customer's instructions and deadlines.

Once you have targeted which opportunities you will pursue - prepare and submit your quotation, bid or proposal. Follow all instructions and allow enough lead-time to meet the deadline. Monitor the award process.

7. If awarded the contract, be prepared to provide outstanding results to the customer.

Your reputation is critical in marketing your company. If you are going to pursue a contract, be sure you can do the work and provide a quality product or service.

8. Evaluate each marketing effort to learn from your experiences and ask

for a debriefing if you are not successful.

Lastly, whether you win or lose a contract, take the time to evaluate what you did well in the process and what you wish you had done differently. If you are not successful, ask for a debriefing. Learn from your marketing experiences.

State and local opportunities.

This article has focused on marketing your business for federal contract awards by the U.S. DOT. There are also transportation-related contracts awarded at the state and local government levels. For example, under the Federal-Aid Highway Program, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds billions of dollars in financial assistance to state highway agencies for extensive transportation-related efforts. OSDBU has posted a listing of State DOT Procurement Sites on their web site at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/procurement/states.html#states> to help you research state and local contracting opportunities.

Subcontracting

Similarly, it is important for small businesses to explore subcontracting opportunities. Develop relationships with prime contractors to team on opportunities that are beyond your capabilities. OSDBU posts a listing of Prime Contractor databases, including the SBA's Sub-Net, on their Related Links page at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/about/related.html>. Many prime contractors search for small businesses in the SBA ProNet database at <http://pro-net.sba.gov/>, so be sure to register there and keep your information current.

**(You can learn more about certifications in the September 1999 Transportation Link article at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/translink/sept99/index1.htm#TOC1>)*

Eugene Faison Equals Three Communications®

Mr. Eugene M. Faison, Jr., is Chairman and CEO of Global Exchange, Inc., known by its trade name *Equals Three Communications®*. *Equals Three*

Communications® is a communications agency specializing in social marketing. Incorporated in 1982 with funding from the Agency for International Development, Global Exchange, Inc. teamed in 1987 with S.W. Morris & Co. In 1993, Mr. Faison bought S.W. Morris & Co. and Global Exchange evolved

into *Equals Three Communications®* in 1997.

"We primarily communicate about social issues and change. We focus on modifying people's behavior". For instance, *Equals Three Communications®* has been working with the Department of Transportation (DOT) for over 15 years on a program called Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management (TEAM). This is a coalition that includes organizations such as the professional sports leagues, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the National Safety Council and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) – just to name a few. Through this partnership, awareness of the dangers of alcohol-impaired driving has increased and new solutions to its prevention have

been implemented.

Other DOT projects that *Equals Three Communications®* has worked on include:

- a national webcast conference for the Bureau for Transportation Statistics (BTS)
- a conference for Secretary Slater on the Economic Development of the Mississippi Delta,
- a partnership effort between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the National Transportation and Clean Air Campaign Initiative
- a campaign to stop red light running in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Mr. Faison's dedicated staff of 60 works not only with government clients, but also with those in the nonprofit and commercial sectors. *Equals Three Communications®* awards include the ADDY, TELLY, Gold Screen, Blue Pencil and most recently, the DOT's 1999 Outstanding MBE award. In addition to public sector clients, the agency provides counsel to organizations such as The Rockefeller Foundation, Industrial Bank, Giving Capital.com, the Morino Institute, EarthShell Corporation and the Alliance for Clean Air and Transportation.

Equals Three Communications® is continually transforming its business as the communications industry evolves. They are working with dot.com businesses to develop business models

and communications skills which facilitate the transition of employees into the "new economy".

Eugene Faison grew up in an entrepreneurial family and has been working since he was nine years old. He offers sage advice to new companies, "Plan! Research! Understand your market and respond to it accordingly." A core value to *Equals Three Communications®* is research. "No campaign can be accomplished without audience research, which allows the issues to be identified and understood before solutions can be offered," states Mr. Faison.

This value-based, performance-driven company has grown to over \$7.5 million in 1999, by doing well while doing good!

To learn more on *Equals Three Communications®*, call (301) 656-3100, e-mail emfaison@equals3.com or view their web site at www.equals3.com.

BUCKLE UP AMERICA!

There is a Presidential Initiative to Increase Seat Belt Use Nationwide, its goals are to:

Increase national seat belt use to 85 percent by 2000 and to 90 percent by 2005 (from 68 percent in 1996).

Reduce child occupant fatalities (birth to 4 years) by 15 percent in 2000 and by 25 percent in 2005 (from a total of 653 in 1996).

As we wind up the summer and approach Labor Day week-end, many of us will be driving more than usual. Please be sure to Buckle Up!



Adoption of NAICS Codes

Remember, on October 1, 2000 the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is adopting the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) to replace the current Standard Industrial Classification (SIC).

NAICS will serve as the basis for the agency's small business size standards that are used by Federal procurement officials and others to define whether a

business is large or small.

The SBA's new NAICS-based size standards are listed in a final rule that was published on May 15 in the Federal Register. This rule can be viewed at <http://www.sba.gov/size>.

More information on NAICS, including a matching SIC codes to NAICS codes table, is available on the U.S. Census Bureau web site at <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>.

International Transportation Symposium

The U.S. Department of Transportation is one of the hosts of an *International Transportation Symposium: Moving into the 21st Century – Best Practices of Today and Lessons for Tomorrow* that will be held on October 9 – 12 in Washington D.C.

This symposium will consider worldwide transportation issues in the aviation, surface and maritime areas.

The symposium will provide attendees with opportunities to learn from one another by exchanging information about countries' best practices with respect to such issues as:

- Changing consumer expectations
- Seamless modal integration
- Workforce capacity
- E-commerce and its impact on transportation
- Information and technology advances
- Safety and security standards, and
- Innovative financing of multi-modal transportation systems.

For more information contact Brenda Preston or Angela Dilver-Dendy at 800-532-1169 ext. 66397, Brenda.Preston@ost.dot.gov/ ext.61791 Angela.Dilver-Dendy@ost.dot.gov, respectively. Additional information will be published in the next edition of *The Transportation Link*.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR August/September/October 2000

DATE	EVENT	CONTACT
September 11	Second Annual ITS America <i>Show Me the Market Symposium</i> Huntington, CA	Katrina Mayo (202) 484-4549 www.itsa.org
September 13-16	Congressional Black Caucus 30th Annual Legislative Conference Washington, DC	(202) 675-6730 800-784-2577 diradmin@cbcfonline.org www.cbcfonline.org
September 21	ITS Maryland Fifth Annual Meeting Baltimore, MD	Bobbie Sharma (202) 403-5492 www.itsmd.org/calendar.asp
September 24-27	National MEDWeek Conference Washington, DC	1-877-MED-WEEK gimarshall@mbda.gov www.mbda.gov
October 9-12	International Transportation Symposium: <i>Moving Into the 21st Century: Best Practices of Today and Lessons for Tomorrow</i> Washington, DC	1-800-532-1169 Brenda Preston, x66397 Angela Dilver Dendy, x61791

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